

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

SOUTHEAST REGION

NEWS RELEASE

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RED SNAPPER POACHER ORDERED TO PAY \$18,000

Late last month in Mobile, Ala., Albert C. Adams, owner and operator of the fishing vessel LILLIE LOUISE, was ordered to pay a fine for unlawfully harvesting red snapper during the closure of this recreational and commercial fishery, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced today.

_____ Administrative Law Judge P. Thomas McElligott, assessed an \$18,000 civil monetary penalty as well as a 120-day permit suspension against Adams for numerous charges including unlawfully harvesting 474 pounds of red snapper, possessing 29 undersized red snapper, making false statements to an authorized officer regarding his fishing activities, and impeding the conduction of the investigation.

_____ The charges filed by NOAA upheld the 1976 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

_____ "Judge McElligott's decision should alert the fishing community that those who break the rules designed to rebuild the overfished red snapper fishery will be brought to justice," said NOAA Enforcement Attorney Cynthia S. Fenyk. "It simply does not pay to violate the law and is even more foolish to compound any violation with lies and efforts at concealment."

"A concerned citizen called us with information about Adams' poaching activity and NOAA enforcement agents conducted the investigation that led to the charges," said Gene Proulx, Special Agent in Charge of NOAA's Office for Law Enforcement's Southeast Office. "This case illustrates how one well-founded call can help curtail poaching. Our enforcement staff will work with everyone to ensure that our nation's precious marine resources are harvested at a sustainable rate."

Adams has 30 days to appeal the decision.

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NOAA Fisheries urges all citizens to report suspected fishery violations during weekly business hours of 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Eastern, to its Southeast Region Law Enforcement Division at (727) 570-5344, or after hours and weekends at its National Enforcement Hotline at (800) 853-1964.

This and other Southeast Regional news releases and fishery bulletins are available on the region's Internet home page: <http://caldera.sero.nmfs.gov> or NOAA's Internet home page, <http://www.noaa.gov/public-affairs/press2001.html>.

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